

## **Rules and Policies**

A lot of individuals would debate the most common way to ensure a learner's safety is to set boundaries for the student in their classroom. There are rules and regulations you can put into place in your classroom based on your school's policies and your own preferences. It is important to not only enforce your own rules that you put into place, but the school rules too. If a student notices you have consideration for the school policy, they will respect you more and be more likely follow your rules for them. For a student to be expected to follow your expectations, but you cannot do the same for the school, they could use that as an excuse not to listen.<sup>1</sup>

When creating your set of suggestions for your students, the best thing to do is to state it positively. Hearing “do *not* slam doors” will possibly annoy your students. To state it in the proper way, you could say: “shut doors gently” A less demanding tone will also help with your students listening. Instead of the prior, you could say: “when shutting doors, do as gently as you can.” Students will appreciate a non-bossy injunction and be more likely to obey it.<sup>1</sup>

Another key piece of the rules in the classroom is to make them open ended or general so the student can imagine a lot covered under the one rule. If you have a too specific rule, the student can find loopholes to get around it. Now, here you might say, “that’s fine, I plan on making a rule for everything I want my students to do!” You were a student once; imagine how they would feel if they had a chapter book of requirements you expected of them. They would completely ignore it, and have no respect for your protocol. An example of creating a broad or general list would be, “treat others with respect.” The *others* portion covers their peers, their teachers, their parents, and everyone they come into contact throughout the day. *Respect* covers a

wide array manners the student can incorporate in order to for students to comply with your requests.<sup>1</sup>

*Try creating a scenario where a student can get away with wrongdoing because of loopholes when you use the “Safe, Respectful and Responsible” model. This model includes all requirements students need to fit in order to develop the safest environment for you and those in your classroom.*

It is essential to have these general rules, requirements, suggestions, etc. visible or within the students access from the first day of classes. Creating the basis of what you expect of your students will help them understand how they should act from the very beginning. They will recall a visual, especially in times where they may begin to act inappropriately for the situation, which will prevent them from making the decision to do something where someone else can be uncomfortable. Therefore, it is a good idea to create a poster, picture, or any other type of visual the students can refer to throughout class period. This visual should also be posted in the front of the class or somewhere where each student can view it.<sup>1</sup>

The overall knowledge of the student is not necessarily the only thing that will prevent behavior you do not want in your classroom. Student need to be instructed as well. Going over the rules and your expectations on the first day of class, and then your enforcement of the rule will play a big part in the student’s behavior. The students will more likely behave if you are

frequently, though not all the time, reiterating your policy to them. Enforcing said policy must be done too. If there is ever a time for a teacher to be consistent, thing is as good as any.<sup>1</sup>

### **Addressing Behavioral Issues in the Classroom**

When it comes to enforcing the rules, you want to do it as unbiased as possible. A teacher must be open to the possibility that other scenarios and elements are at play. Try to uncover any information about the student reacting, behaving, or doing something in retaliation of anything factor. Doreen Richard, a 5th grade teacher of 25 years recalls a time where she could have used this strategy.

*“I remember one year, one of my students pushed her chair away from her desk rather violently and walked out of the room. I made the mistake of thinking she was just refusing to learn the subject matter and became upset with her reaction. I followed her and asked her to come into the room, but she refused. I eventually told her I would have to call the office if she did not come in; I left her there sitting in the hallway and did so. After speaking with her at the end of class, she finally felt comfortable enough to tell me the boy who sat behind her was kicking her chair to annoy her, and would now follow her requests to stop.”*

Even though Doreen neglected to stop the behavior from happening due to her unawareness of the situation, she realized that the behavioral issues came from another party at

well. What Doreen did that every teacher *should* do is follow up with the student who is behaving poorly. A lot of the time a student reacts to something because they are frustrated, do not understand, or just need some help.

Let us take a look at other aspects of Doreen's situation. What else did she do properly? Following the student and speaking with her is a starting point. What the most important thing is was the follow up. Doreen spoke with the student again once her reaction was relatively over. This is a perfect time to understand what really happened between the student and his or her issue. Doreen made sure to let her student know she was misbehaving as well. When she went to the hall and the student refused to return she stated she would have to call the office because of her defiance. Doreen also did not yell and make a scene in front of the other students, but took the opportunity addressing her in an more off-side location she happened to locate to. This prevents possible embarrassment of the student, as well as a more comfortable environment for the student to talk.

The biggest thing that Doreen did was not give up on the student. Her follow up showed she cares as an educator and wants to help. When students know there is someone on their side, they are more comfortable in your class and less likely to have issue.

There are always improvements you can make to ensure the next time something happens, you will get a more positive reaction. Doreen realized that she should have accounted for other variable in her student's reaction and not jumped to conclusions that the student was reacting because she was just trying to be defiant and did not want to learn the material. Doreen says since that incident, she tries to keep an eye out for behavior issues while class is in session by

listening to what's going on in the background. This way she can try her best to handle a possible situation before it happens.

Now that Doreen's student has confided in her, what is the best way to handle the situation? Doreen decided to confront the male student about his behavior and told him it was not acceptable and he can not continue to do so. Luckily that student understood and neglected to keep pestering the female student.<sup>2</sup>

When you are asking your student to cease their possibly distracting behavior, it is good to always say "thank you" when they have completed your request. Being polite will show the student that you take this seriously and you appreciate their efforts to contribute to the classroom safety policy. The biggest thing with expressing your thanks is you are recognizing their proper behavior, not their improper one.<sup>3</sup>

It is not likely that every situation you face in the classroom will end in the student's understanding and trying their hardest not to do it again. Sometimes you simply have *that* student in your class that just enjoys disrupting the flow of things. The key thing in the situation is not to dismiss the student, and never give up on that student. Their reactions are for important reasons, especially to them. To ensure that your class is safest for everyone, you need to be willing to work with the students known to misbehave to help them rectify the situation and address the reasons for their behavior in the first place. This may take time, but in the end, that student will probably be aware of your commitment and appreciate your help.

If you are unsuccessful at trying to reach the student in your class who seems to be giving you a problem, consult with your co-workers if you have not done so yet. A number of times, there will be a student in class that will not listen to anything. No matter how hard you try, they

do not want to talk with you. Another person can come to assist, or just talk with that student instead. Try to accommodate the students and their needs.

There are so many different types of situations you can run into in the classroom. Typical types of students, whether is be the talker, debater, the sulker, or the boycotter, there are numerous tools you can use to make the best of each situation.<sup>2</sup>

### **Handling the Situation without Misbehaving Yourself**

What's worse than a student disrupting the class because of behavioral issues? A teacher disrupting the class because of behavioral issues. Not necessarily their own (sometimes that is the case) but the student's issues as well. When a teacher flies off the handle and does not control their emotions, temper, or beliefs, it creates an environment where every student feels uncomfortable and possibly in danger depending on the situation. Many time, a student that witnesses a teacher "lose their cool" will lose respect for them in certain situations. The biggest thing is to stay positive the best you can.

Letting personal issues get in the way of teacher is one of the biggest things you do not want. Like other professions, it is important to make sure your personal life does not affect the classroom. There are scenarios where a teacher can be emotional over something and a student's poor behavior in the classroom can initiate a teachers poor reaction. The student's behavior is not what they are reacting to, but their own frustration for all the teacher is dealing with. This sets a poor atmosphere in the room.

Another way teachers can react poorly to situations include yelling at a notoriously distractive student. Teachers who witness the repeat offender tend to slowly lose their tolerance

to such behavior. Next thing you know, Jimmy is talking to his friend while your trying to teach and you burst out at him. Sure, Jimmy should not have been talking, but bursting out is not going to help any situation, no matter how many times you have dealt with it.

Keep a level head at all times- or at least try to. Teachers need to show their students support, even if it is a student your do not like because of their behavior. A teacher's job is to teach students a certain content, to create the safest environment for them as possible, and to help them when they need it.

### **References**

<sup>1</sup>- [http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/downloads/pdf/classroom\\_rules\\_example\\_guidleines.pdf](http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/downloads/pdf/classroom_rules_example_guidleines.pdf)

2- Doreen Richard account

3- <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/five-persistent-behavior-problems-and-how-handle-them-grades-6%C2%968>

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